



NOV 65 1990

FIRST
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CANADA

MIKE BARON • SPYDER

BADGER

TM



STEVEN

BADGER™

CREATED BY MIKE BARON



BADGER, a self-styled crime fighter, metes out bloody justice to jaywalkers, ticket scalpers, indifferent teenaged fast-food clerks — in fact, any-damn-body he feels like, because he's CRAZY!



Badger is just one side of **Norbert Sykes**, a Vietnam veteran with a personality problem: it's split seven ways. Nevertheless, Norbert almost always finds himself in a Badger state of mind, which suits his wife, **Mavis Davis Sykes, M.D.**, just fine.



Badger is a master of Shorin-ryu and dozens of other obscure, esoteric, arcane, not to mention abstruse martial arts. He can also talk to the animals — just like Dr. Doolittle. Only with better results.



Badger and Mavis live with **Ham the Weather Wizard** in a castle south of Barneveld, Wisconsin. Ham and Badger met while both were inmates at a state mental hospital. Through cunning and chicanery, Ham has amassed a considerable fortune.

Badger calls everyone Larry.



Last Issue: Mavis rescued a legendary five-legged pony of the Asian highlands from the abusive owner of a carnival sideshow. Badger went along for the ride.

COVER ART: **Steven Butler**

BADGER™ Vol. 1, No. 65, November 1990. Published by FIRST PUBLISHING, INC., OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 435 N. LaSalle, Chicago IL 60610. Published monthly. Copyright © 1990 First Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved. Price: \$2.25 in the U.S. Subscription rates for twelve issues: \$27.00 in the U.S., \$30.00 in Canada, and \$50.00 foreign rate. All payments must be in U.S. funds. The stories, incidents, and characters mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, without satiric content, are intended or should be inferred. The Badger, Ham, and all prominent characters featured in this issue are trademarks of First Publishing, Inc. Printed in the U.S.A. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **Badger**, c/o First Publishing, Inc., 435 N. LaSalle, Chicago IL 60610.

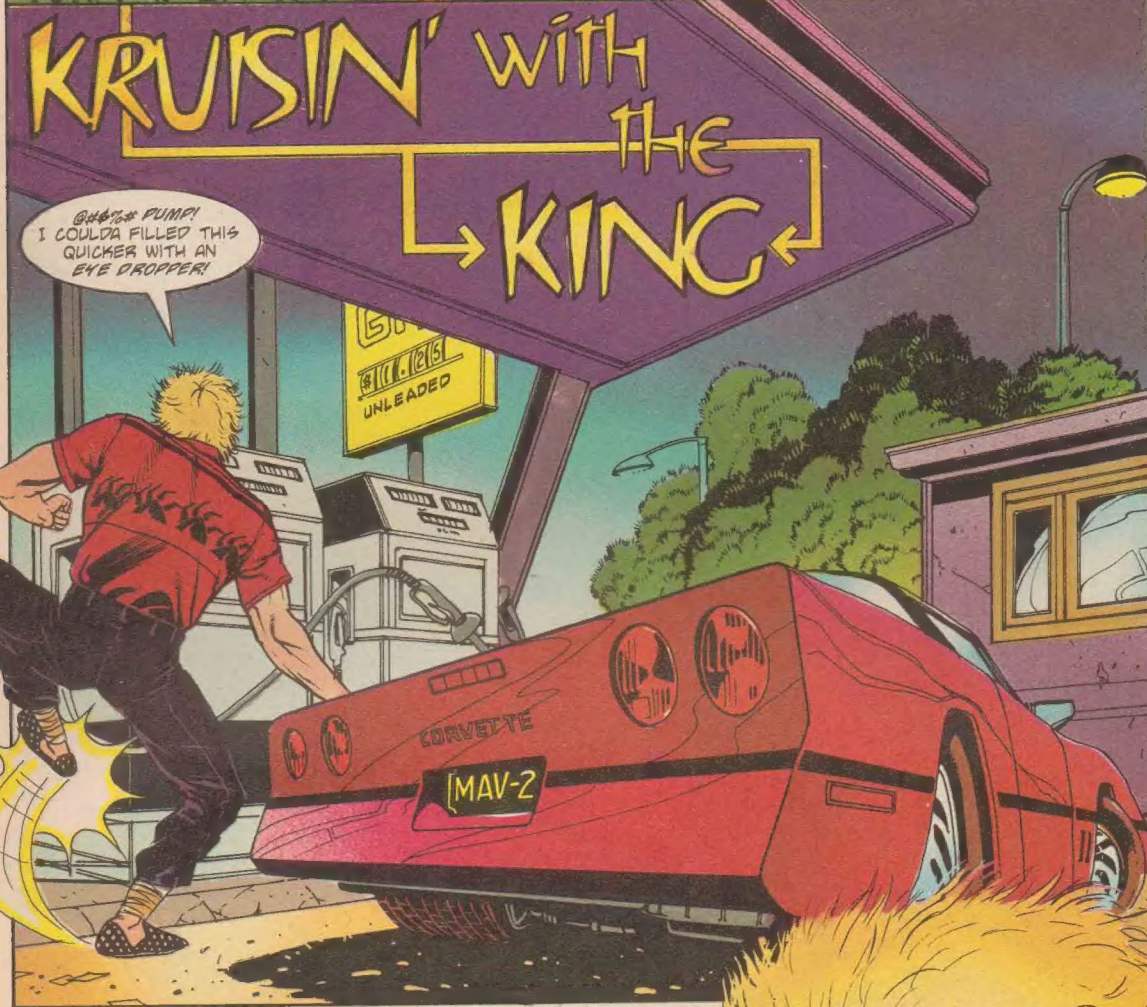
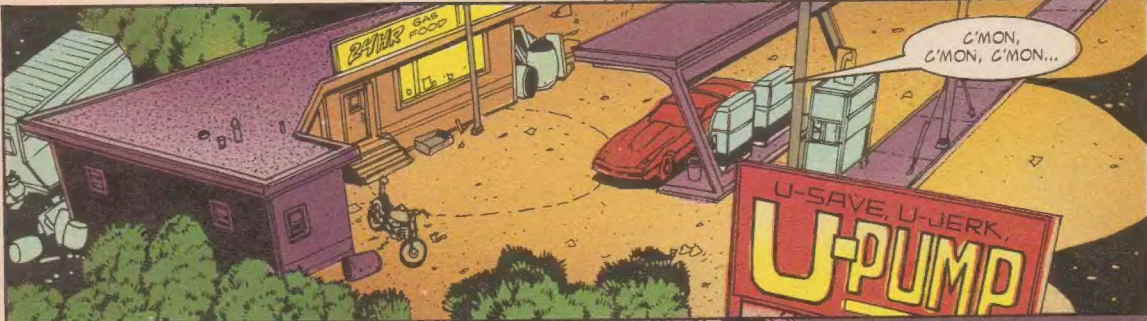
mike
BARON
WRITER

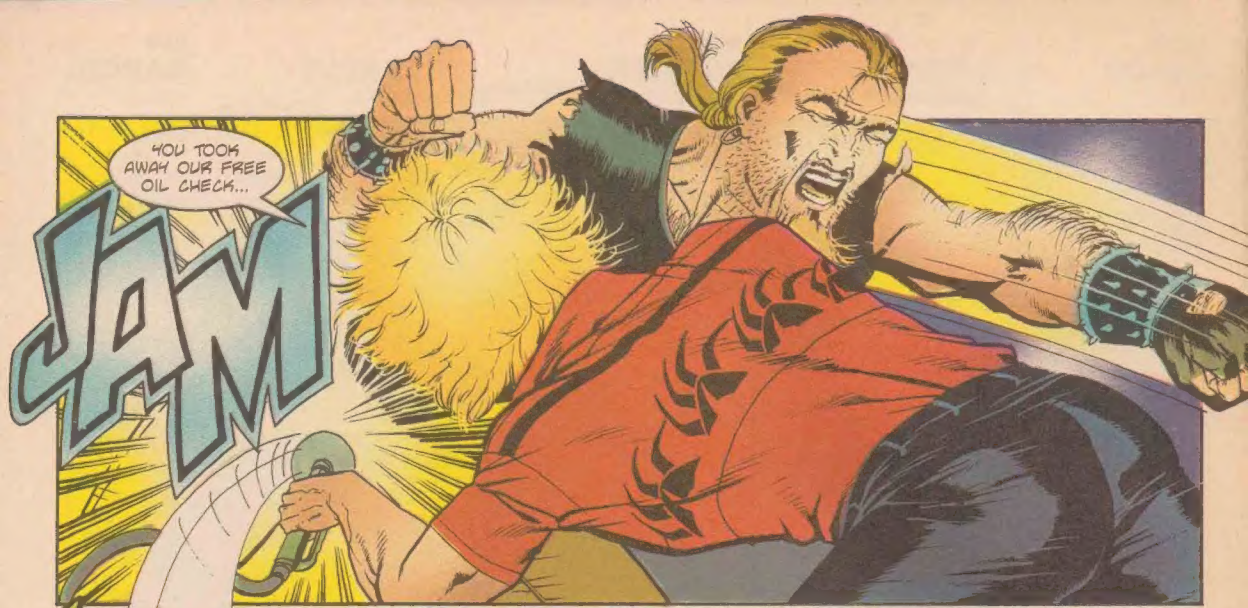
SPYDER
ARTIST

willie
SCHUBERT
LETTERER

ian
TETRAULT
COLORIST

bob
GARCIA
EDITOR







WHAT THE
HELL IS THIS?!
GODDAMNIT!
I'LL KICK HIS
BUTT TOO!

HOLD ON THERE,
YOU GUYS! AH DON'T
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
FIGHTIN' ABOUT...

I DON'T
KNOW EITHER.

BUT I'LL
TAKE A PIECE OF
THIS HERE KUNG
FU ACTION!

IT'S HIM!
IT'S REALLY
HIM!

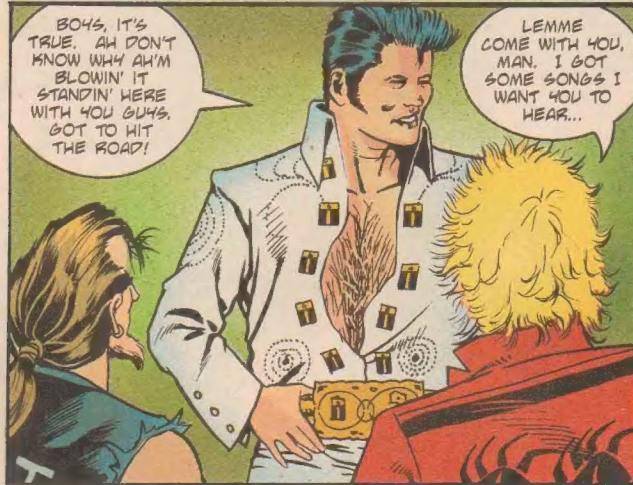
YOW!



YOU BOYS
DON'T HAVE
NO REASON TO
FIGHT. WHAT
SAY YOU
JUST SHAKE
HANDS?

GOSH!
KING! ARE
YOU ACTING AS AN
HONORARY SHERIFF'S
DEPUTY? WHAT DID
YOU THINK OF
THE TRAVELLING
WILBURYS?

WOW!
ELVIS, MAN!
SO IT'S TRUE--
YOU FAKED YOUR
OWN DEATH TO BE
FREE OF THE
TRAPPINGS OF
FAME!



BOYS, IT'S
TRUE. AH DON'T
KNOW WHY AH'M
BLOWIN' IT
STANDIN' HERE
WITH YOU GUYS.
GOT TO HIT
THE ROAD!

LEMME
COME WITH YOU,
MAN. I GOT
SOME SONGS I
WANT YOU TO
HEAR...



EVERYBODY'S GOT
SONGS THEY WANT ME
TO HEAR, BUT THAT
DON'T MEAN I GOT TO
HEAR 'EM!

WAIT A
MINUTE, ELVIS!
I'M THE
BADGER!

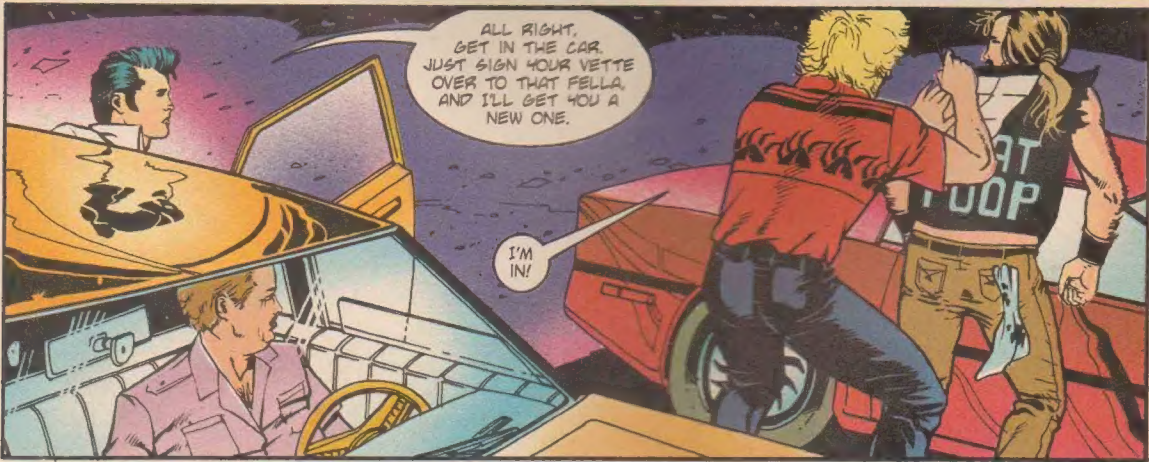
AH DON'T
CARE IF YOU'RE
THE WALRUS.
AH'M TRYIN' TO
LIMIT MY
ENTOURAGE.



HEY BOSS!
THAT'S ONE OF
THE TOP MARTIAL
ARTISTS IN THE U.S!
YOU SHOULD THINK
ABOUT TRAINING
WITH HIM.

WARREN, YOU'RE
HOUNDING MY EVERY
STEP.

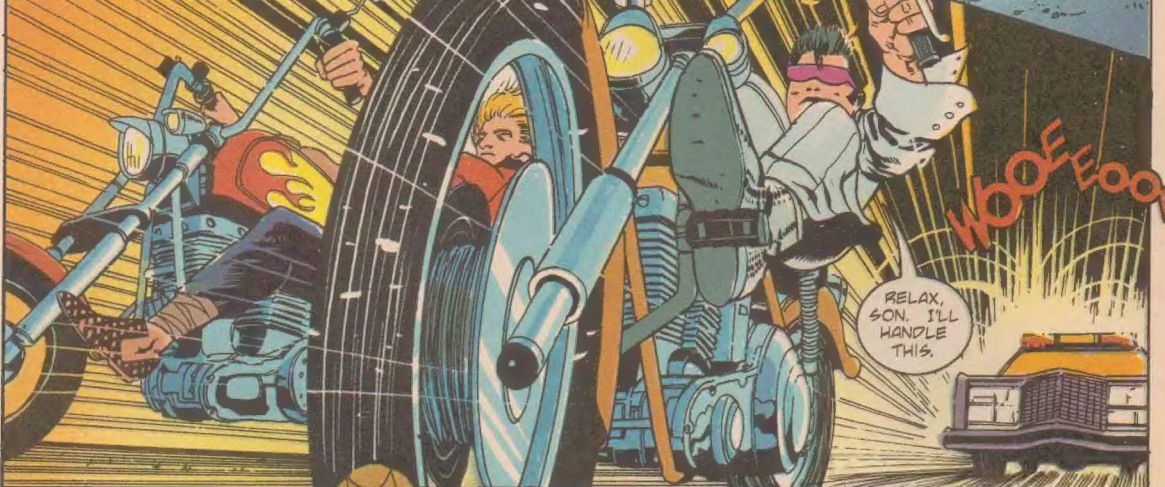
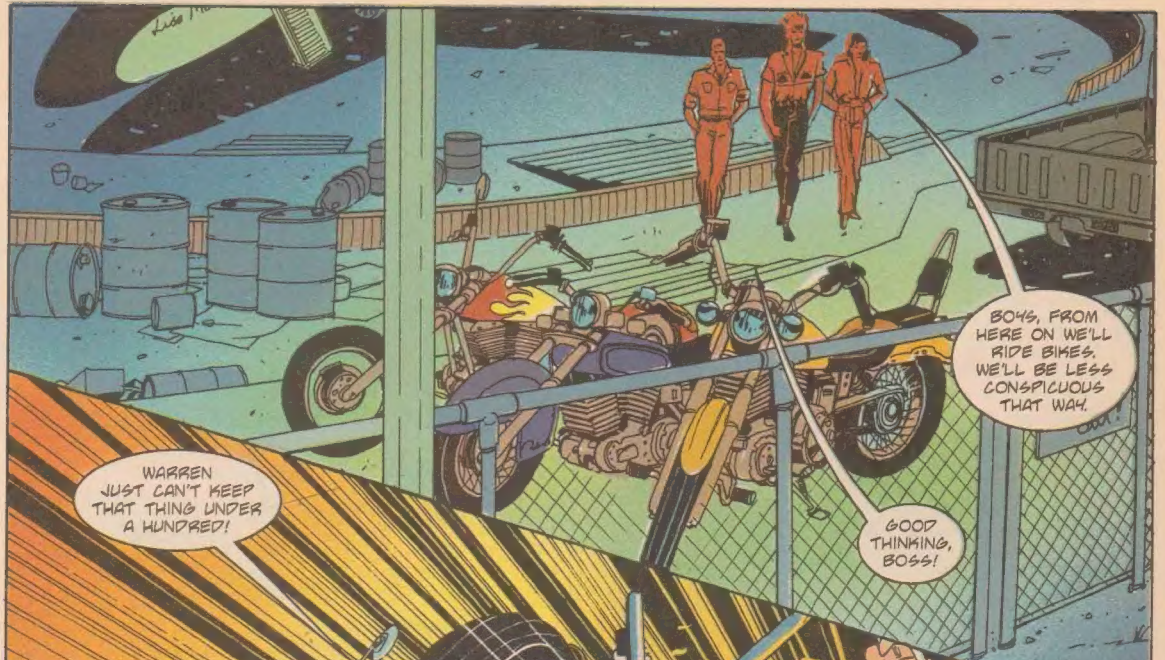
HE AIN'T
NOTHIN' BUT A
HOUND DOG.



ALL RIGHT,
GET IN THE CAR.
JUST SIGN YOUR VETTE
OVER TO THAT FELLA
AND I'LL GET YOU A
NEW ONE.

I'M
IN!







OFFICER, MAH BOYS AND I ARE WORKING ON AN INTERNATIONAL DRUG SMUGGLING RING. CHINA WHITE HIDDEN IN CERAMIC ELVIS STATUETTES FROM HONG KONG.

LET US KNOW IF WE CAN BE OF ANY ASSISTANCE, SIR.

BOYS, AH RECHON AH'D BETTER SWEAR HOU-ALL IN AS TEMPORARY U.S. MARSHALLS. REPEAT AFTER ME...

AH SOLEMNLY SWEAR, ON MAH MOMMA'S GRAVE, TO UPHOLD THE HIGH TRADITION OF SOUTHERN MANHOOD AND TO OBEY THE BOSS IN ALL THINGS, NO MATTER HOW CRAZY.

WE'RE FULLY COMPE'D, BOYS. MEVY AND ME HAVE AN UNDERSTANDIN'...

YES SIR, AH SURELY WILL.

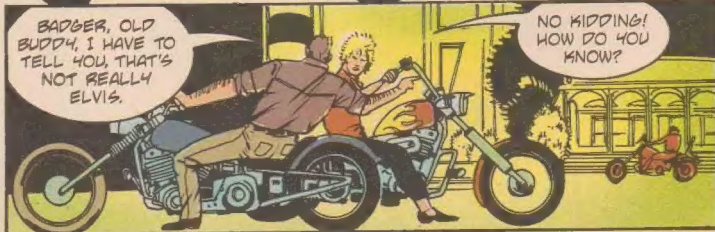
I GOTTA PEEL OFF, BOSS. THE DUKE'S IN TROUBLE.



WHAT KINDA TROUBLE?

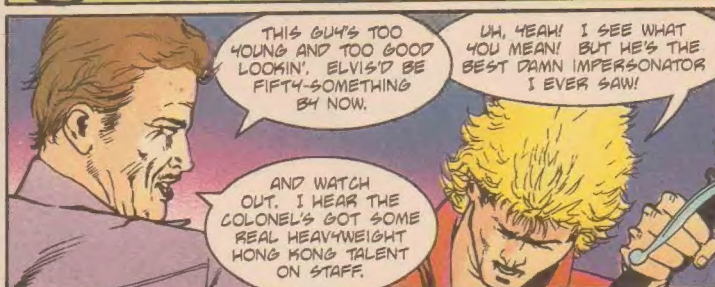
IT'S THE SYRIAN ARMY, BOSS. THEY'VE GOT HIM AND ABOUT 200 LEBANESE CHRISTIANS PINNED DOWN...

WELL, GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE, AND WATCH YOURSELF.



BADGER, OLD BUDDY, I HAVE TO TELL YOU, THAT'S NOT REALLY ELVIS.

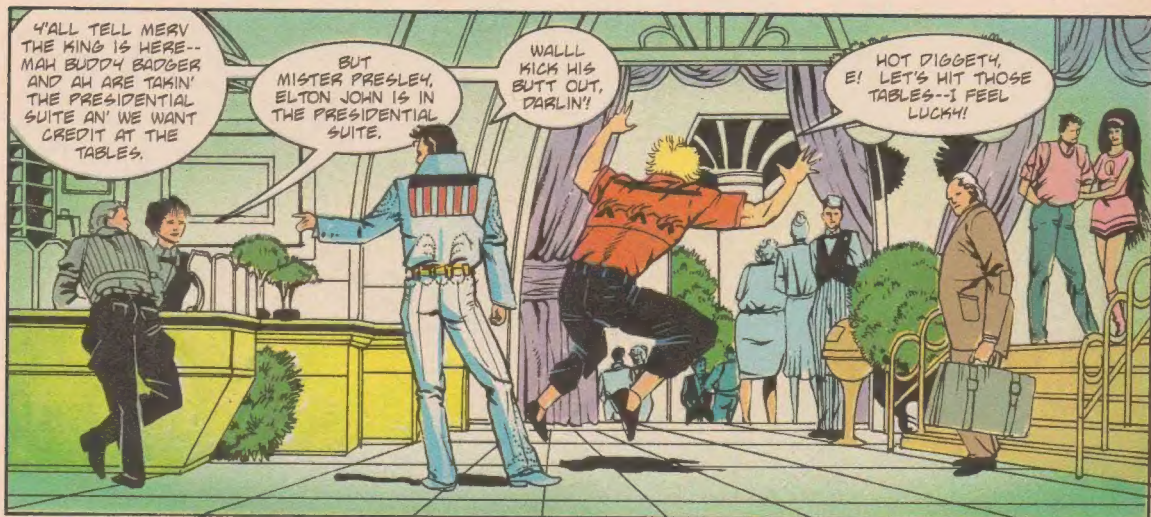
NO KIDDING! HOW DO YOU KNOW?

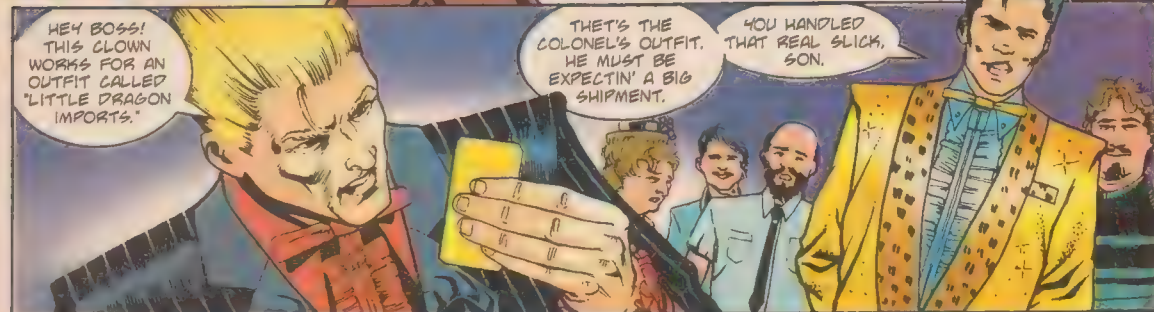
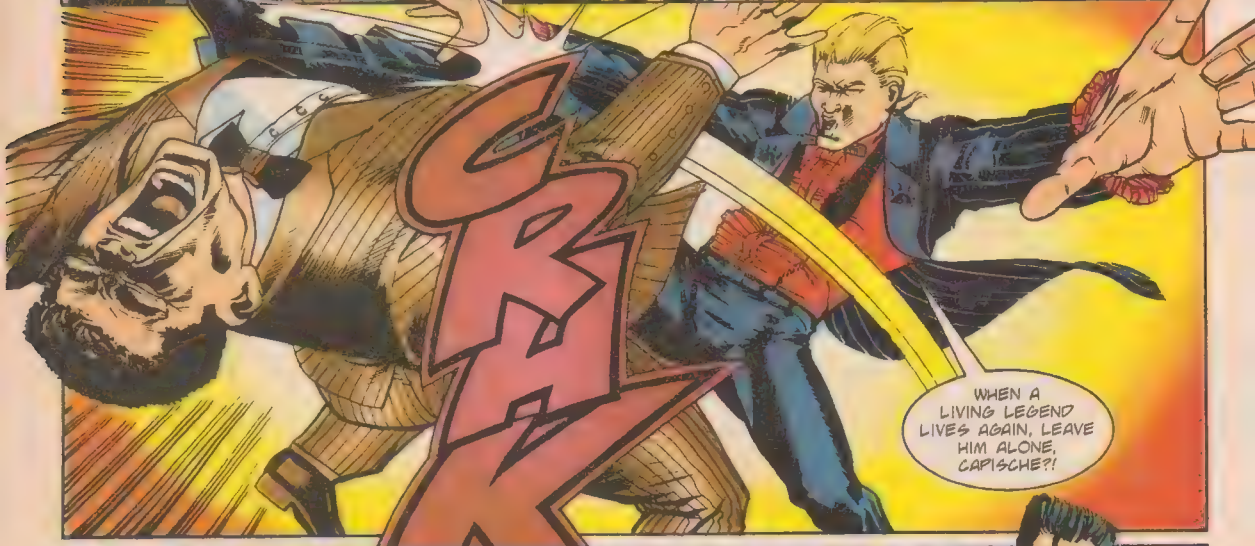
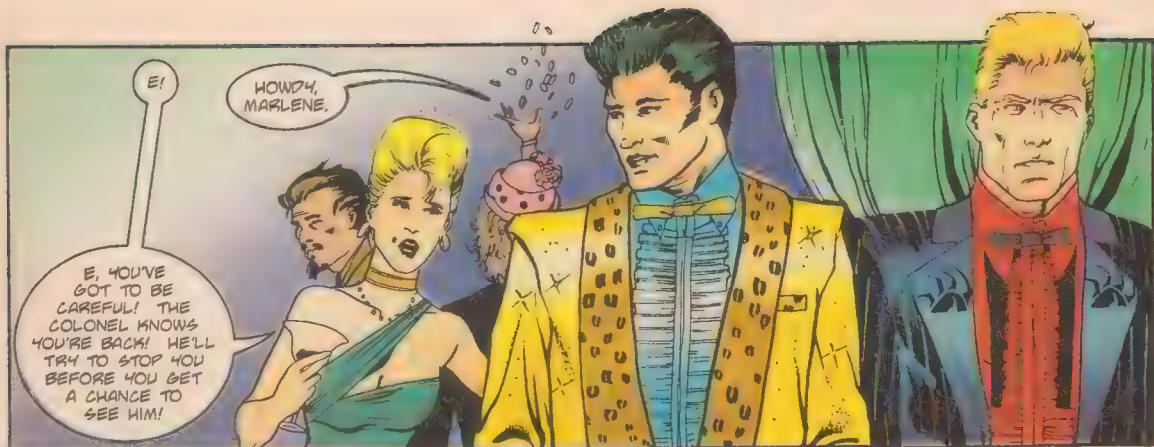


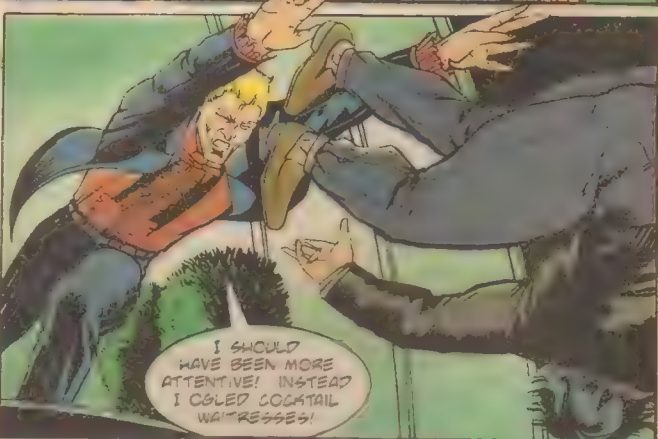
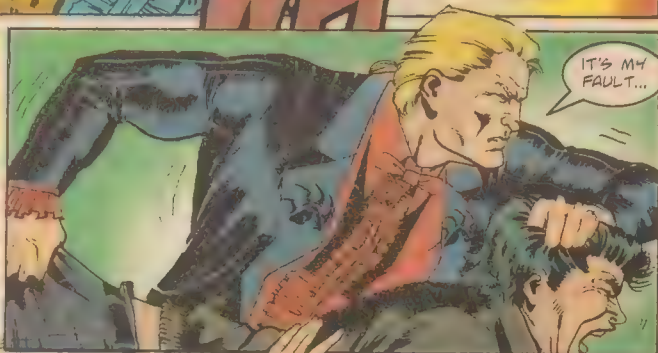
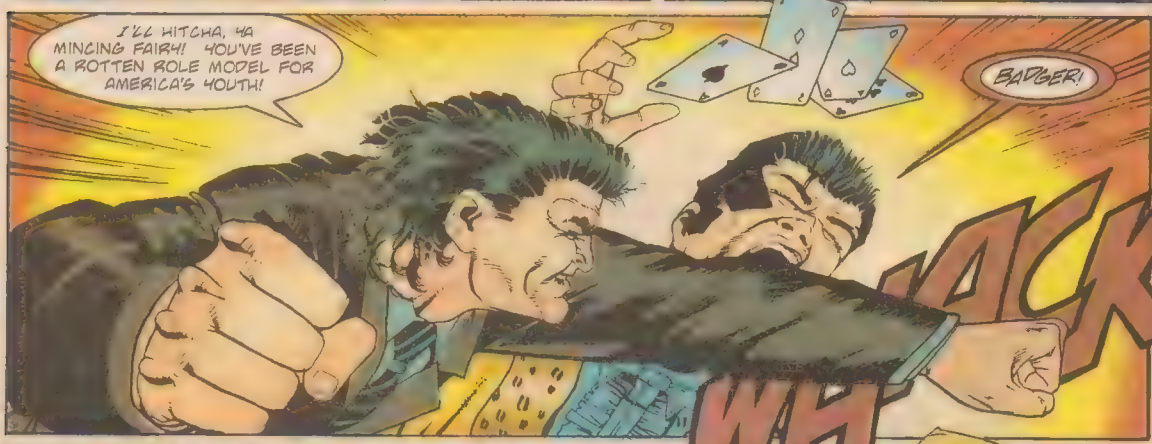
THIS GUY'S TOO YOUNG AND TOO GOOD LOOKIN'. ELVIS'D BE FIFTY-SOMETHING BY NOW.

UH, YEAH! I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN! BUT HE'S THE BEST DAMN IMPERSONATOR I EVER SAW!

AND WATCH OUT. I HEAR THE COLONEL'S GOT SOME REAL HEAVYWEIGHT HONG KONG TALENT ON STAFF.









BOSS! BOSS!
PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
I'LL BEAT MYSELF UP
IF YOU WANT!

THAT WON'T
BE NECESSARY,
BADGER. AH KIN
SEE WE AREN'T
GONNA HAVE NO
PEACE 'TIL WE
CONFRONT THE
COLONEL.

HERE'S
\$50,000. GO
GET ME SOME
CHIPS--GET ME SOME
DOUGHNUTS WITH
MAPLE ICING
TOO.



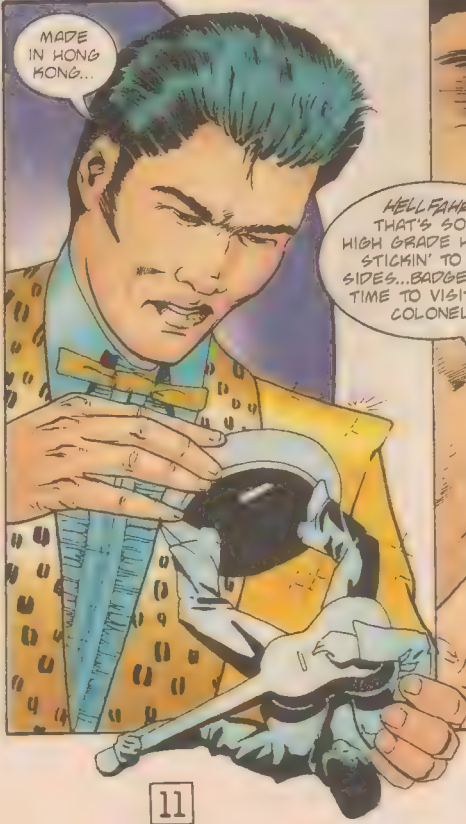
LET ME
HAVE ONE OF
THOSE ELVIS
STATUETTES
PLEASE.

WE JUST
GOT THOSE IN
YESTERDAY.

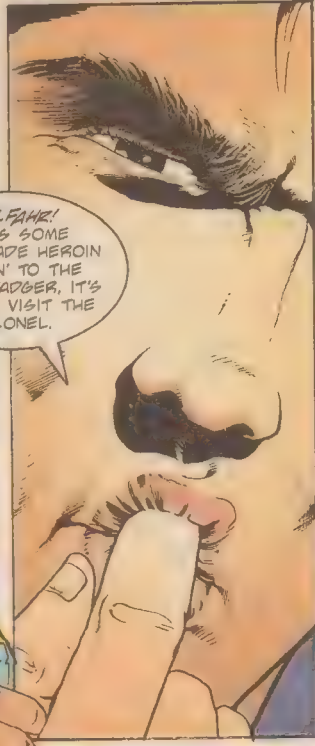


HERE YOU GO,
E...I ALSO FOUND
THESE CERAMIC
STATUETTES.

LEMME SEE
THAT.



MADE
IN HONG
KONG...



HELL FAME!
THAT'S SOME
HIGH GRADE HEROIN
STICKIN' TO THE
SIDES...BADGER, IT'S
TIME TO VISIT THE
COLONEL.

First PERSON SINGULAR

Swayed by a Samurai Saga

I have a confession to make. Until I became editor of *Lone Wolf and Cub* — First's American edition of the Japanese *manga* classic — I'd never read an issue. Oh, sure, I bought the first dozen issues or so, and I even occasionally picked one up and flipped through it, but I never

sure I receive from reading *Lone Wolf and Cub* is ample reward for the slight extra effort initially required to fully appreciate the technique. And each issue comes as a refreshing change from ordinary American comics fare.

LW&C isn't just an ordinary Japanese comic, either. Koike and Kojima have crafted a marvelous epic, rich in substance and possessing remarkable depth. The culture and philosophy portrayed may seem as alien to us as the storytelling, but you'll have no trouble recognizing Koike's and Kojima's mastery of their medium.

If you haven't been picking the book up lately, now is a great time to start. We're currently running a mini-epic-within-an-epic that encompasses issues 31 through 39 and features a major confrontation between Ogami and his nemesis, the Yagyu clan. Formerly content to snipe at the Lone Wolf through agents or subterfuges, the Yagyu are now openly challenging him in a

Koike and Kojima have crafted a marvelous epic, rich in substance and possessing remarkable depth.

actually sat down and read an issue from cover to cover. There was just something... *alien* about the storytelling in the book.

There's been a lot written about the use of cinematic technique in Japanese comics: it's one of their real strengths. But we Americans are used to comics that depend much more heavily on words, so it's not surprising that long, wordless sequences may seem strange to us at first. A lot of information is being imparted visually, but also subtly sometimes, and nuances of expression may hold more meaning than a casual glance can decipher.

It's really not a difficult style to penetrate, though. All it takes is a careful reading of an issue or three to get in step with the rhythm of the storytelling. At least, that's what I discovered when I eventually read every First issue published to date, as part of my editorial duties.

I also discovered that I love the series — so much so that I read most issues a second time just for pleasure. And I found that the aforementioned alienness is one of the series' chief attractions. The plea-

series of face-to-face confrontations. Their goal is the recovery of a letter in Ogami's possession that could expose their treachery to the Shogun, but the battles will prove costly for both sides.

If that's not enough to entice you, there's always the year's worth of dynamite Mike Ploog cover paintings that will start with issue 37. Some of his sketches are pinned to my wall and I can't resist staring at them, in utter awe of his talent.

And for our regular readers who've been concerned about the book's publication schedule of late, we have more good news. We've solved the problems we've had getting stats from Japan and are now back on a monthly schedule. (In reality, LW&C is coming out a little more frequently until we catch up.)

So pick up an issue of *Lone Wolf and Cub*. And while you're at it, you might want to check out issue 24 of *Usagi Yojimbo* by Stan Sakai, published by the fine folks at Fantagraphics. It features a book-length parody starring Lone Goat and Kid. Tell 'em First sent you.

—Byron Erickson

FIRST IN JULY

1 Zero Tolerance #2: The action continues at a breakneck pace as President Bone sends his personal assassin after Molly and Turk. By Tim Vigil, David Barbour, Gary Amaro, and Tim Tyler. Part 2 of 4.

1 Grimjack #76: Rock and roll rules the day as Twilley gets involved in a literal battle of the bands. Whatever you do, don't forget to PLAY THIS COMIC LOUD! By John Ostrander and Flint Henry. Plus, part 7 of *Youngblood*, by Ostrander, Kim Yale, and Steve Pugh.

1 Nexus #74: Horatio prepares to battle Stan in "Showdown." By Mike Baron, Hugh Haynes, and Ame Starr. Cover painting by Les Dorscheid.

1 Badger #65: Badger goes "Kruisn" with the King" in a special all-dead-guest-stars issue featuring Elvis, Bruce Lee, Warren Oates, Liberace, and others. By Mike Baron and guest artist Spyder

1 Dreadstar #60: This is it! The shattering 26-page conclusion to the Palafox saga, as Dreadstar and Company battle Junior and Palafox for control of the galaxy! By Peter David, Angel Medina, and Tim Tyler.

1 Classics Illustrated #12: The Island of Dr. Moreau, H.G. Wells' terrifying novel, adapted by Steven Grant and Eric Vincent.

1 Lone Wolf and Cub #35: By Koike and Kojima. Cover painting by Matt Wagner.

1 Lone Wolf and Cub #36: By Koike and Kojima. Cover painting by Matt Wagner.

1 Mike Grell's Sable #9: By Mike Grell. New cover by Tony Akins.

1 Nexus Legends #19: The Merk makes his first appearance. By Mike Baron and Steve Rude. New cover painting by Les Dorscheid.

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NEXUS VS NEXUS



MIKE BYRON

HUGH HAYNES

KANE STANN

THE BOUT
OF THE
MILLENNIUM!



NEXUS #75 COMING IN AUGUST FROM **FIRST PUBLISHING**

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"LITTLE DRAGON..." THAT REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING. IS THE COLONEL AN ORIENTALIST?



HE'S GERMAN?



YOW, E! YOU'RE PUTTING A LOT ON THE LINE JUST NOW! WHAT IF THE COLONEL DECIDES HE WANTS TO MANAGE YOUR POST-DEATH CAREER?



AH FEEL KINDA RESPONSIBLE.



40, 81
WAT UP! IVE
HAD EXPERIENCE
AT THS SORT
OF THING!

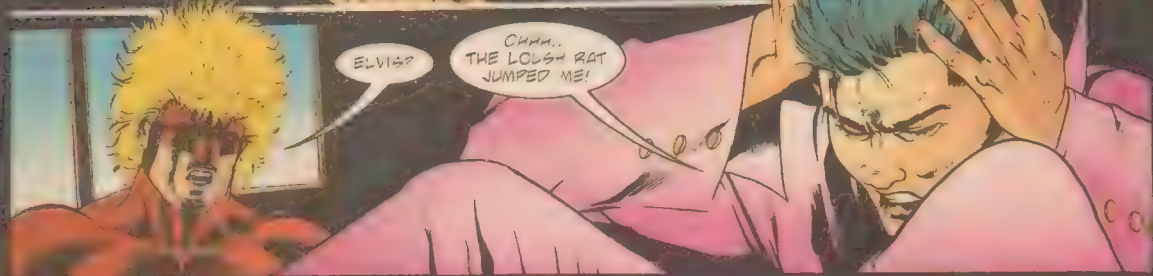
SO HAVE
AH! DIDNT YOU
SEE HAREM
SCARUM?

ED PARKER
HIMSELF GAVE ME
MAH BLACK BELT!



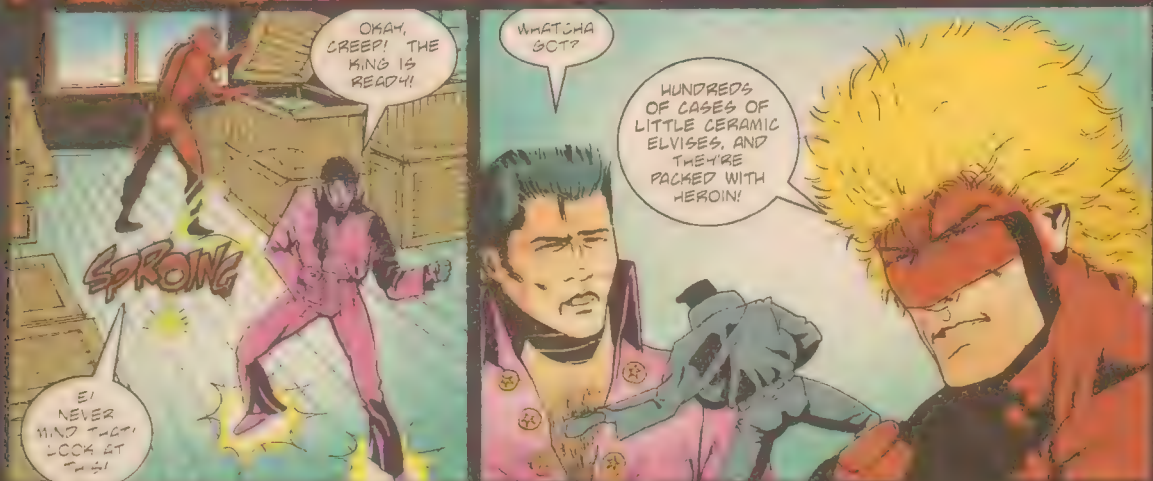
**BONK
CRASH!**

OH FUDGE!
SOMEBODY JUST
CROWNED THE
KING!



ELVIS?

CHHH...
THE LOUSY RAT
JUMPED ME!



OHAY,
CREEP! THE
KING IS
READY!

WHATCHA
GOT?

HUNDREDS
OF CASES OF
LITTLE CERAMIC
ELVISES, AND
THEY'RE
PACKED WITH
HEROIN!

E! NEVER
HIND TUCK,
LOOK AT
THEY!

DANG YOU,
COLONEL! WHERE
ARE YOU? DAMN!
KICK YOUR FAT
BUTT ONCE AND
FOR ALL!

E,
SHUT
UP!

HEAH AH
AM, BWAH--
COME AN'
GIT ME!

YOU
SHOULDA
STAYED DEAD,
BWAH! NOW AH'M
GONNA HAVE TO
TAKE CARE OF
YOU
MAHSEF!

YOU
AND WHAT ARMY,
COLONEL?

THEY GET A
LITTLE BIG FOR
THEY BRITCHES AND
THEY FORGET WHO
MADE 'EM. AH
GOT NEWS FOR
YOU, BWAH...

AH GOT ME
A REAL LEGEND
NOW. AN' HE DOES
HIS OWN SECURITY--
LITTLE DRAGON.
COME ON
DOWN!

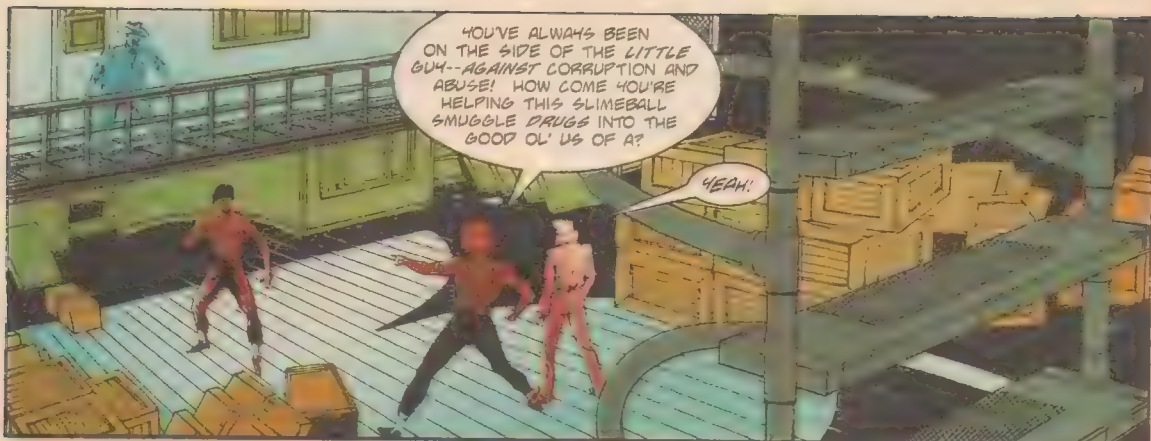


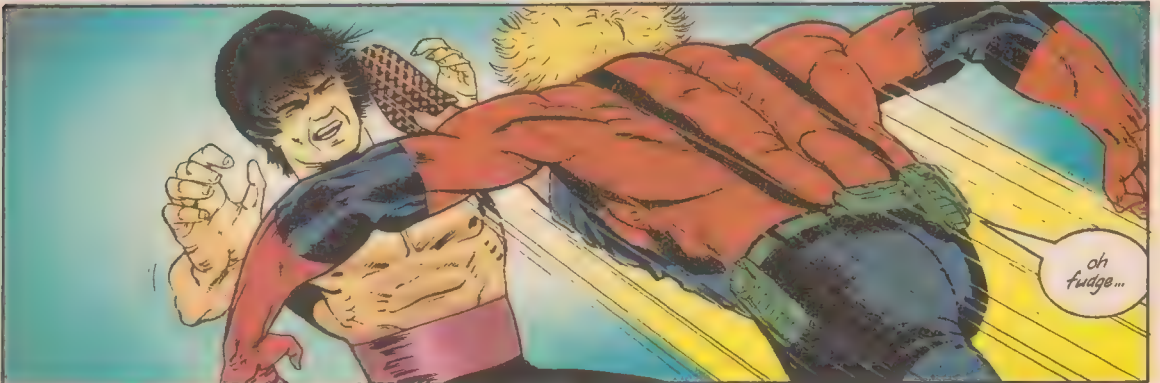
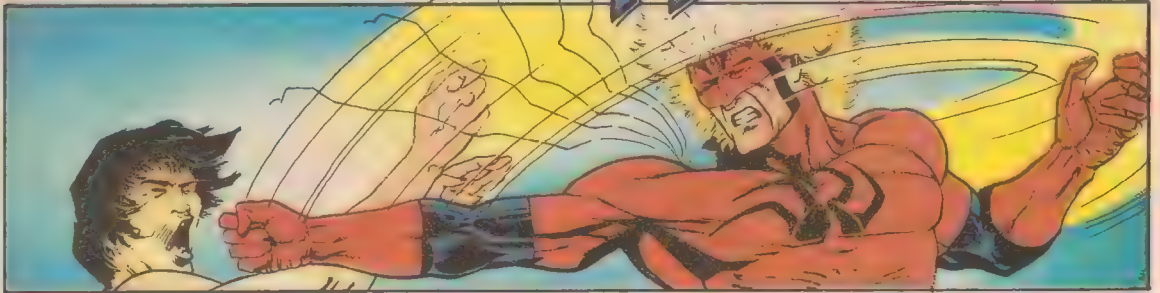
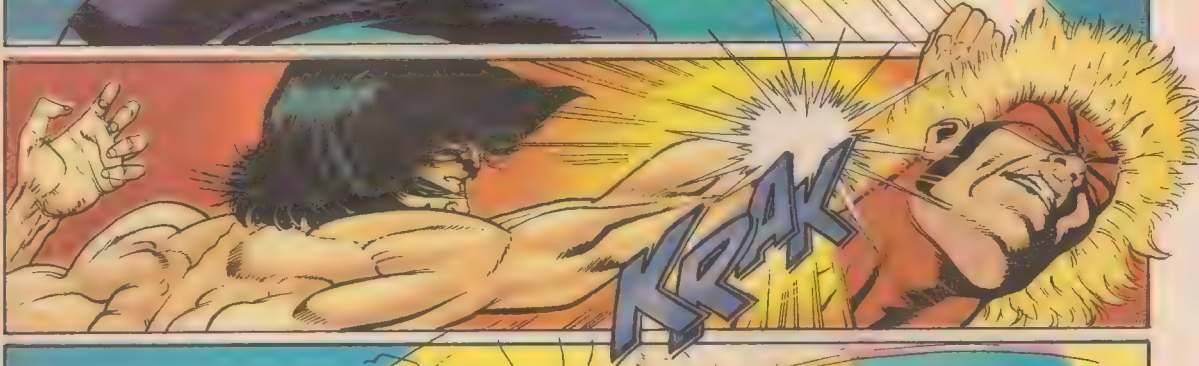
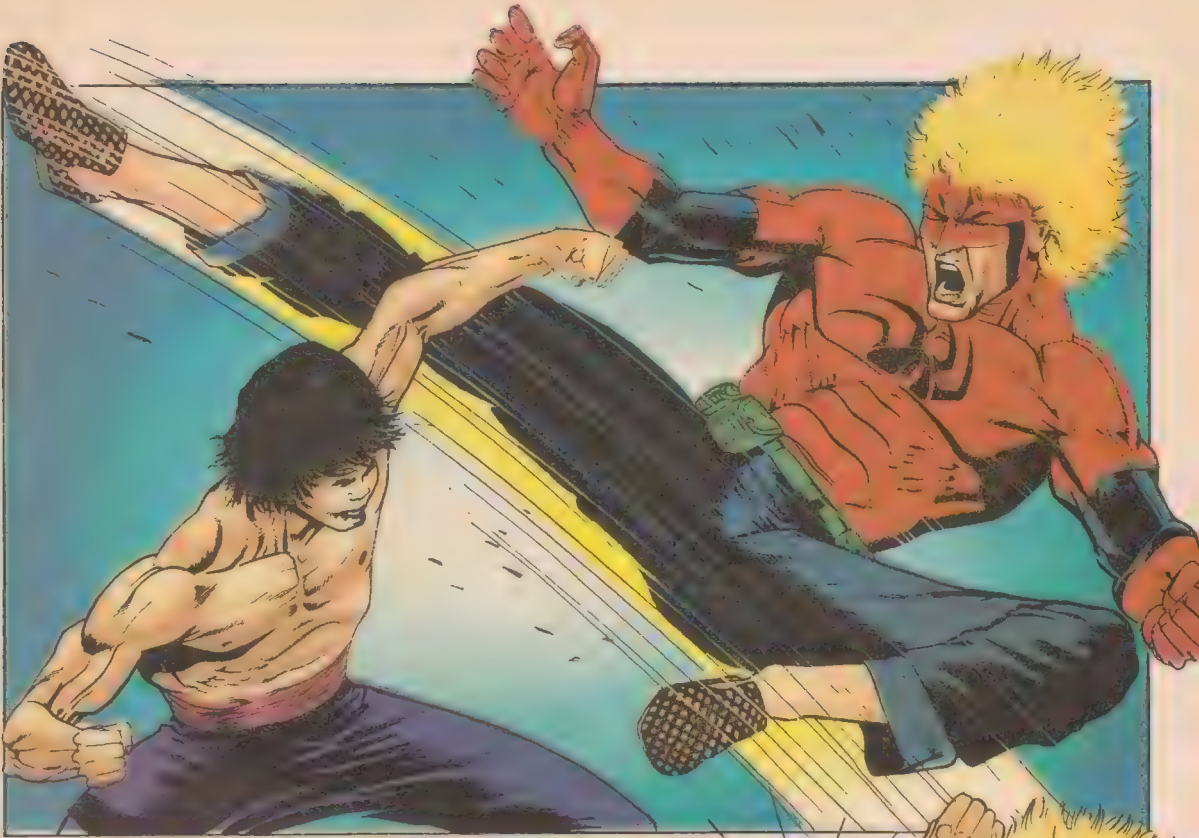
HELLO,
BIG BROTHER,
I SPENT MANY A
MEMORABLE HOUR
IN THE CINEMAS
OF KOWLOON
WATCHING YOUR
EXPLOITS.

I WEPT
WHEN YOU
DIED.

NOW I
REGRET I MUST
KILL YOU
AGAIN.

WAIT
A MINUTE,
LITTLE
DRAGON!





GRIM JACK

casefiles™

John Gaunt's greatest hits re-released! Starting in July, *Grimjack Casefiles* collects the original adventures of John Ostrander's and Tim Truman's soul-weary, battle-scarred mercenary. Issue #1 features the two most requested backup stories from Gaunt's debut in *Starslayer* — "Mortal Gods" and "Buried Past" — with a new cover by "Demon Wars" artist Steve Pugh. Start your collection today!



On sale now from **FIRST**
PUBLISHING

TO THE DEATH!

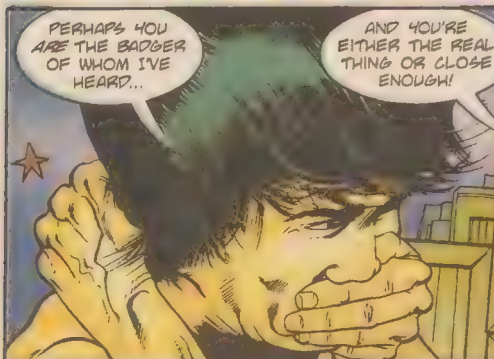
The shattering
conclusion of
the Palafox
Saga!

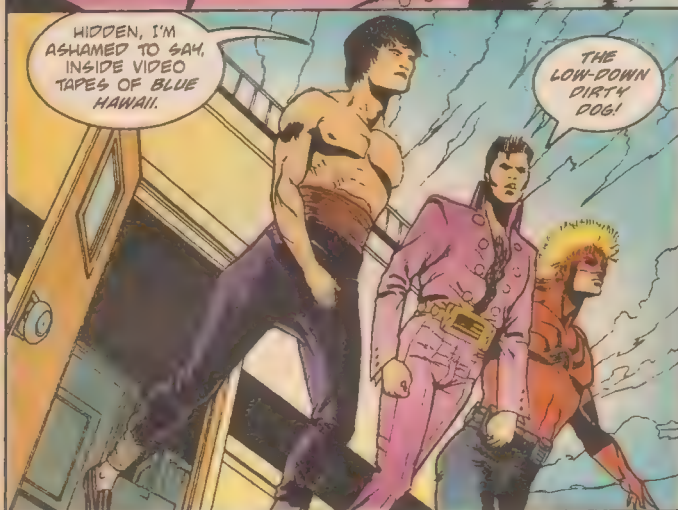
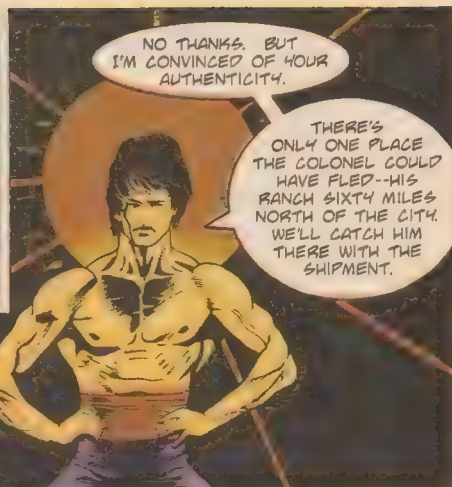
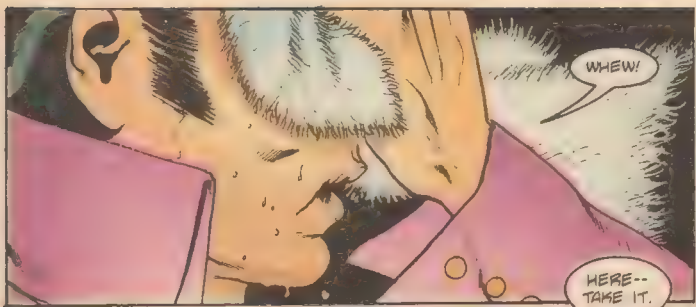
By Peter David
and Angel Medina

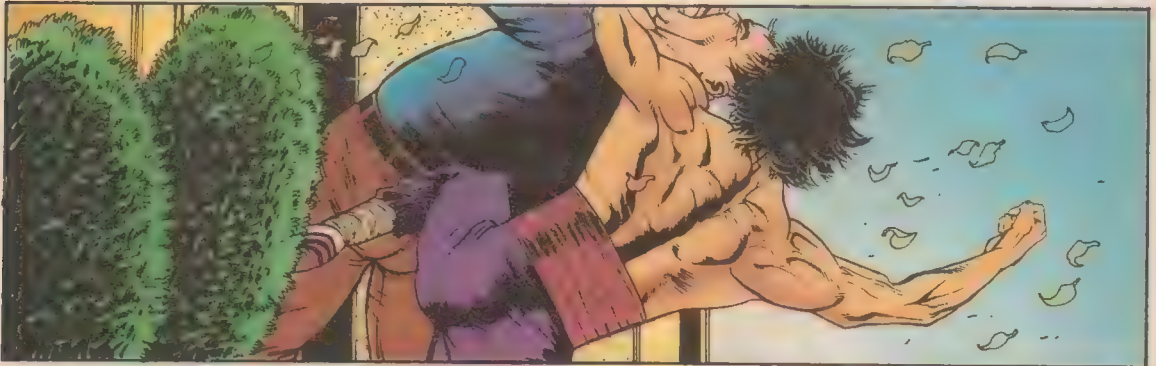
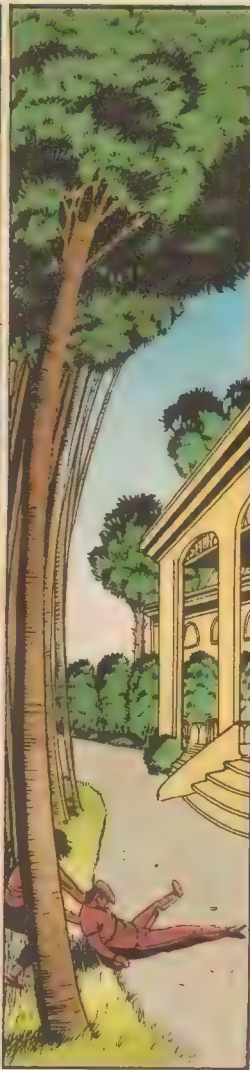
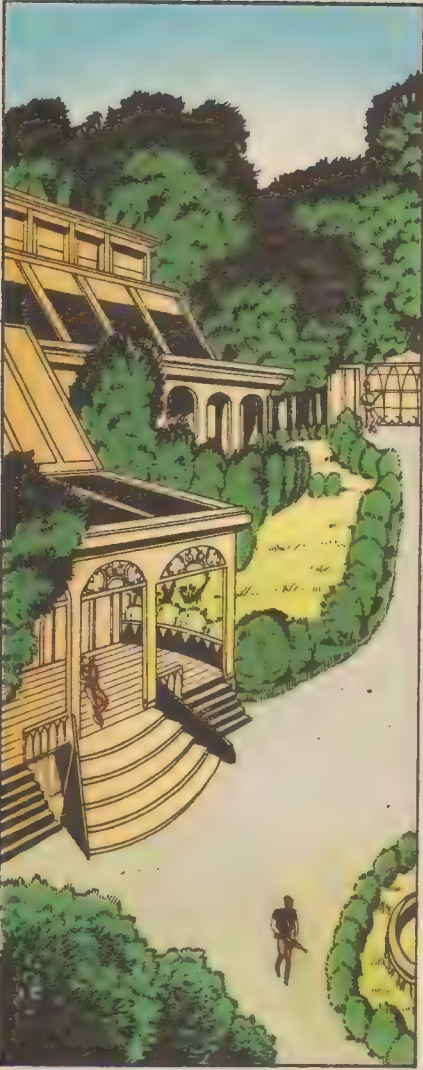
DREADSTAR
60

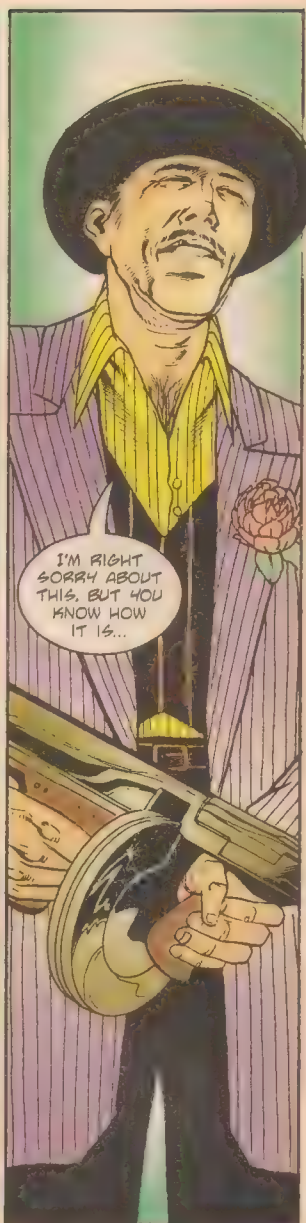
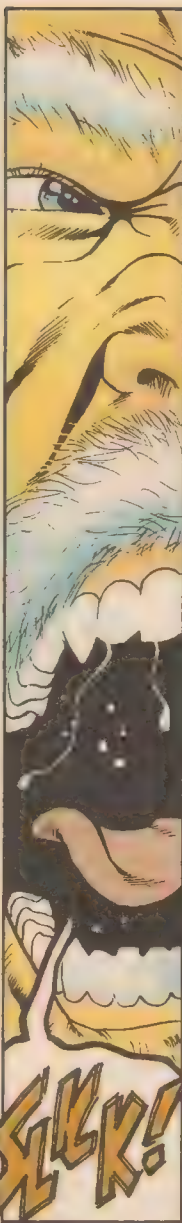
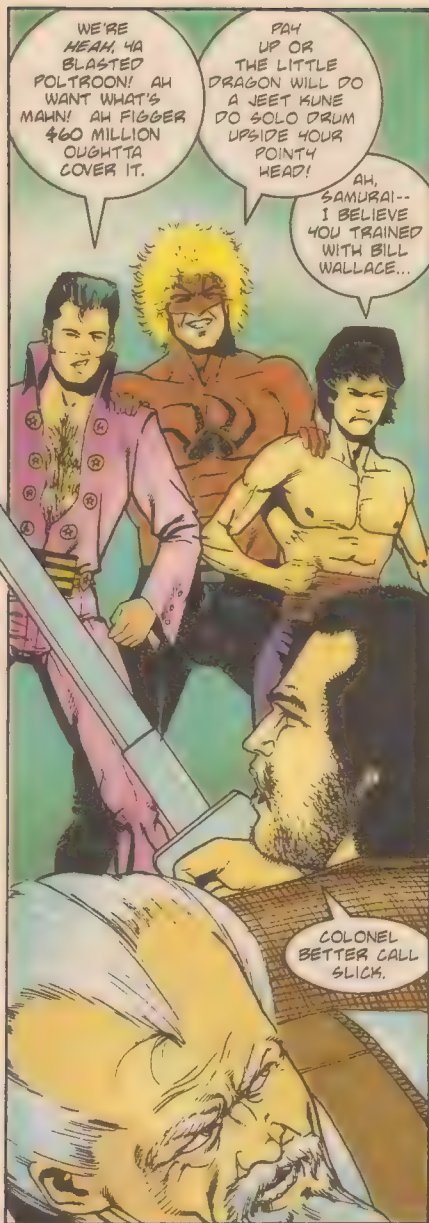
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EPOCH BOOKS

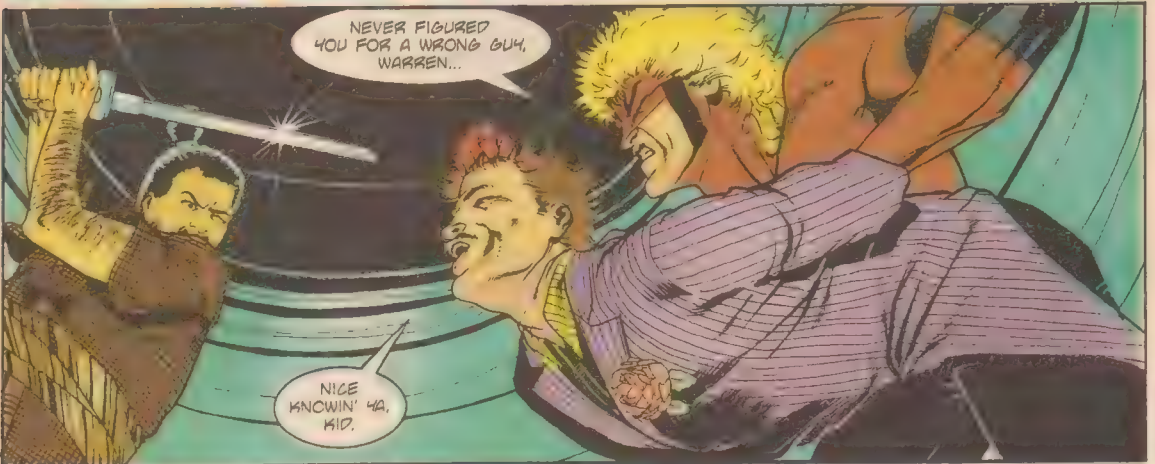
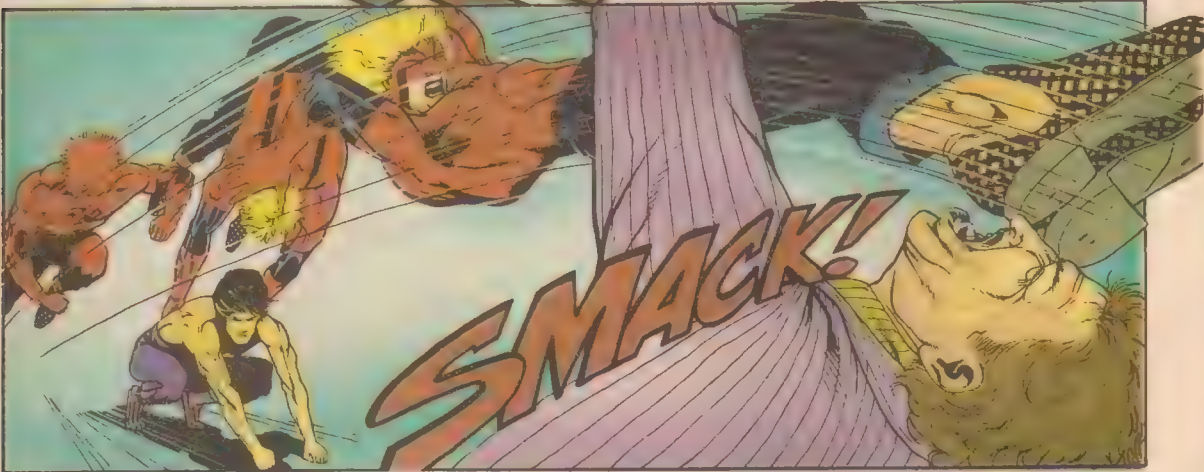
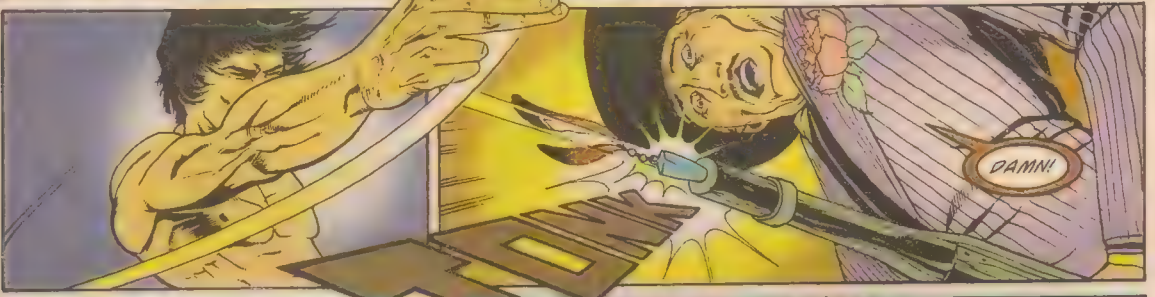


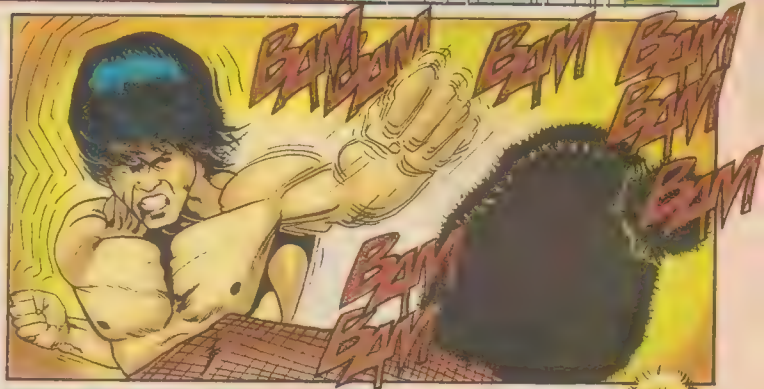
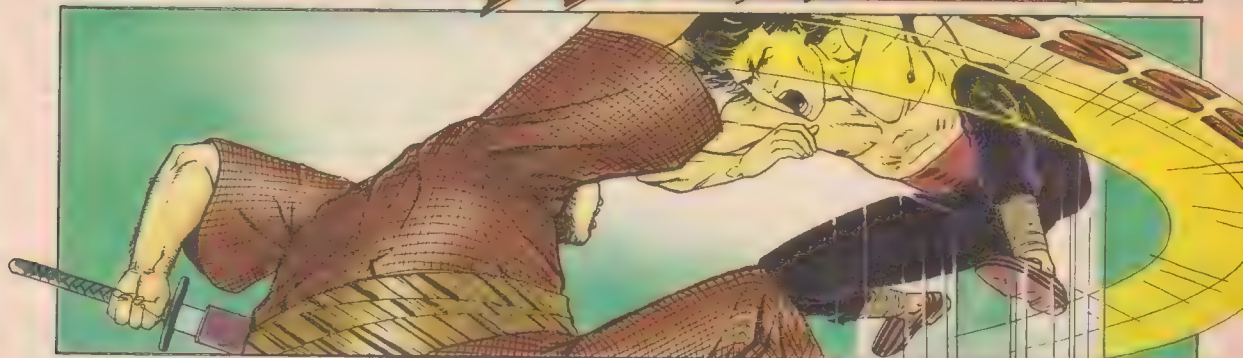
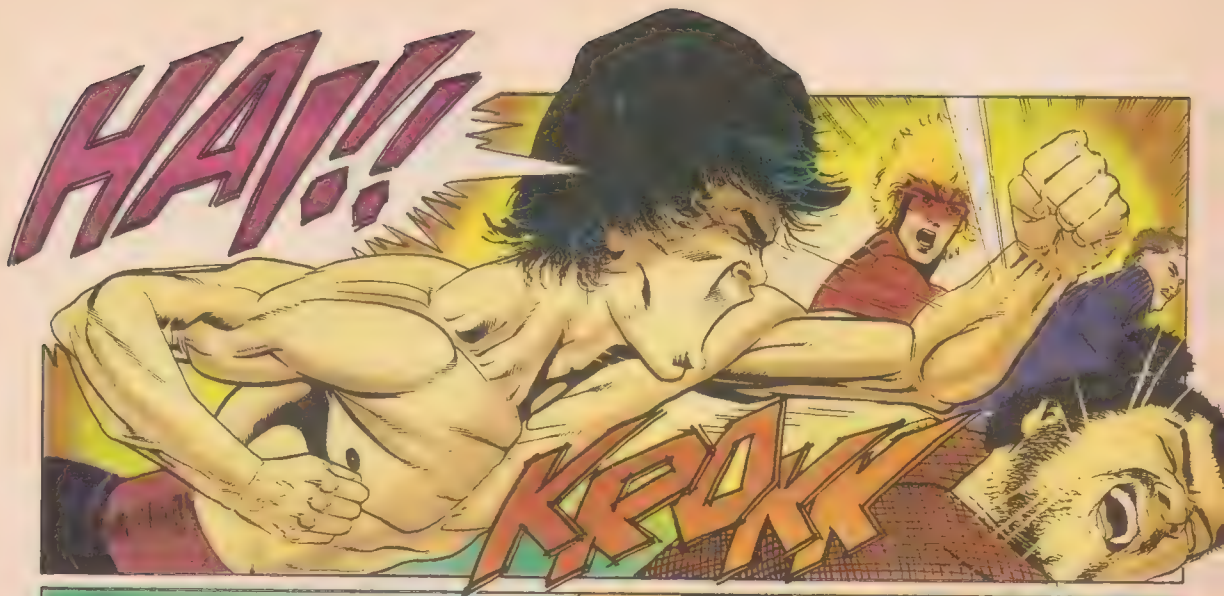


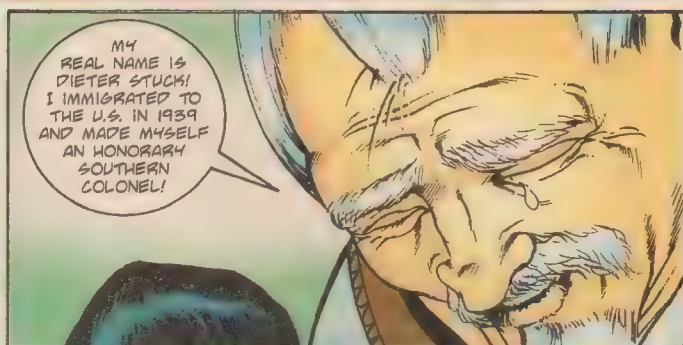
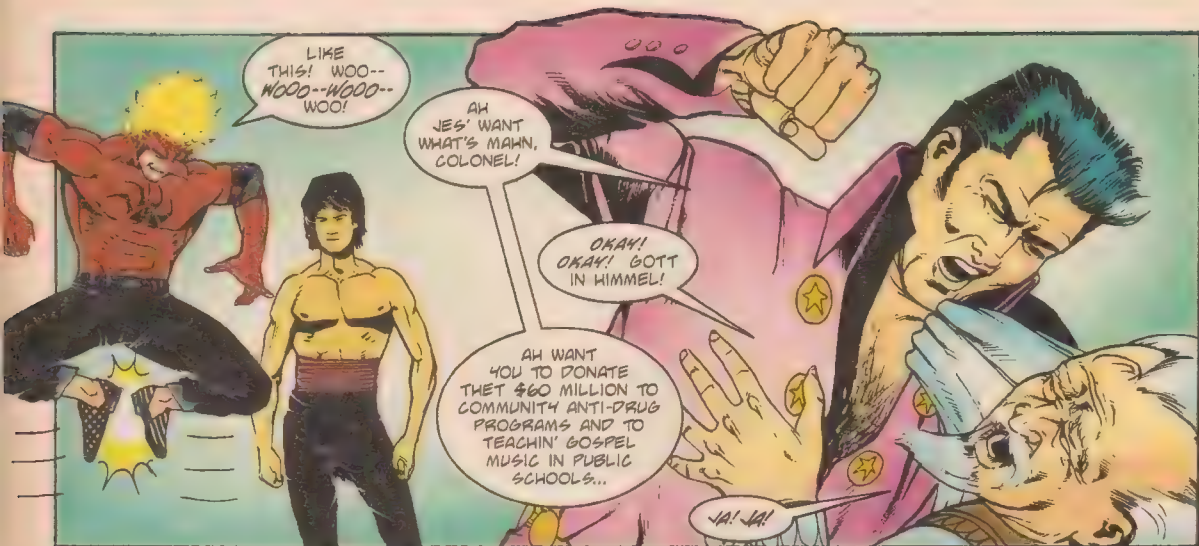






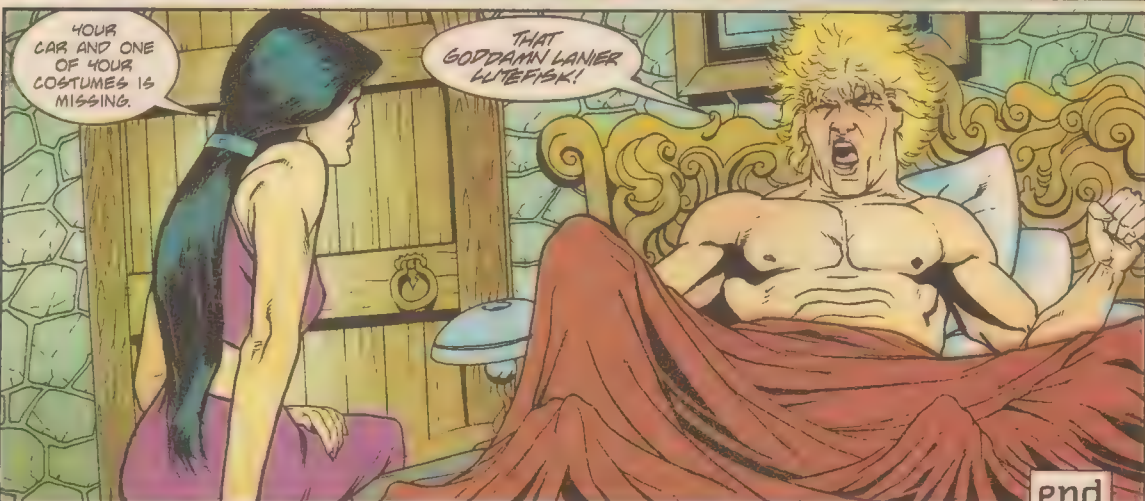
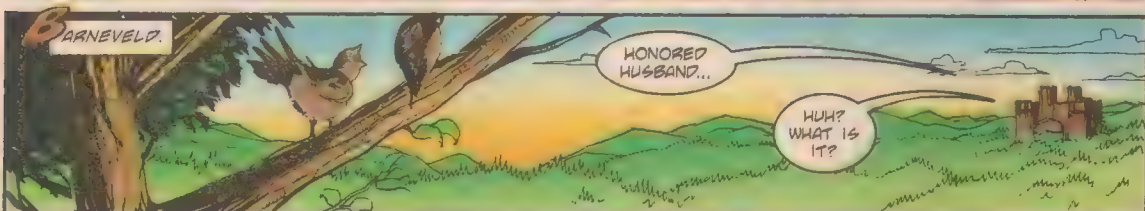








--MAH NAME'S WILSON WITHERSPOON AND AH'M AN AMBULANCE DRIVER IN RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA.



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Dear LARRY

c/o FIRST PUBLISHING, INC.
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CHICAGO, IL. 60610

Dear Badger Folks,

Badger #63 was great! The art, the story, and the fight scenes were all perfect. There was, however, one thing that bothered me. Who was that strange, light-haired woman with the glasses? She seemed to be acquainted with everyone already, so who the heck was she?

It really bothers me when you guys just throw characters into the story with absolutely no introduction. I mean, really... wait a minute!

That wasn't...

It couldn't be...

Wait a minute!

It was Daisy!

Where the hell have you been hiding her this past year? Well, it's good to see her again.

Giles Krill

My, how quickly they forget.

Daisy's been busy. Okay? She has a life, too. Okay? Besides, she was finishing her book: "When Badger Howls!" You'll see it in Badger #69.



Dear Larry,

So Garcia's getting too old for his job? I must say, I feel a bit odd writing my first letter to a comic lettercol at my advanced age, but this is no ordinary comic... so it's "No Remorse" on the turntable and full speed ahead.

I started reading **Badger** with #5, and soon had the first four as well. I've drifted away from it now and then, but always returned. Among other unique characteristics, it's the only book I've ever followed because of the writing. Mr. Baron is very, very good.

So he has a little trouble with his own continuity — hobgoblin of small minds and all that. The

cheap shots are wonderful — the peg-leg joke, "walk this way," and all the rest. The storylines, the repartee, the characters are all superb.

I think the most impressive thing of all is the realism. Everyman with a small twist. Walter (Hill) Mitty.

I rather like this comic, y'know.



So I thought I'd put in a word to counter the tendencies of many recent letters, just in case you take them too seriously.

To start by declaring my allegiances, I'm a Bill Reinhold fan. The space and lightness of his pages, his tremendous grasp of perspective, the way his panel layout served the narrative, accelerating the eye through the story — all great. Those wonderful full-page-width panels, just over an inch high, full of motion. And a great sense of character, as in those classic eyes-akimbo close-ups, but also evident in the spatial relationships of the figures.

I also have high praise for Linda Lessmann's colors. Loved 'em. Ron

Lim was okay, but I wasn't completely sold on him, for a reason I'll come back to.

Baron's use of many different artists' styles to serve a particular story has paid off well: Beckum's "Bob," Shanower's Nemo-like detail, the occasional dash of Jeff Butler, and of course **Badger Goes Berserk**. The ultimate, however, was the Pander Brothers' stupendous take on New York in #59. Brilliant.

Spyder wasn't really my cup of tea, but I could appreciate him: His art had vigour, and a bit of Reinhold's sinew.

Meanwhile, we'd been introduced to Ian Tetrault's coloring. I just don't like it. His palette is very aggressive, and then washes away in the background to disheartening browns and a stunning range of consistently bilious greens. But when he did #59, the greens were actual greens or shaded toward blue instead of yellow, and the browns were absent. I really liked it!

Then the advent of S. Butler, and it's back to the bad acids. Which is doubly a shame for two reasons: Butler has little use for depth and perspective, so the backgrounds just sit there; and Butler's style is very claustrophobic, almost constipated, which increases the aggressiveness of the foreground colors.

When Butler started, I was dismayed; couldn't see any reason to like him. I looked again. He's an accomplished portraitist, does some wonderful faces. But his midshots and groupings just don't make it for me. There's no depth or psychological weight to them.

Poor old Ratfinque really suffered. I'm old enough to remember his first earthly incarnation, and it was a ramshackle, jerry-built air of near-fragility that

he had. The solidity of Motorhead and the Chisums would have been a perfect foil for this, but instead he came out in a rounded, tank-like heaviness that simply met like with like. Disappointing.

I find Steven Butler's panel layouts banal, and his fights don't move.

But my main concern is one that I also had intermittently with Lim: This Badger is too young. He's a lightweight, with no gravities, no irony, none of the marks of experience. It's hard to picture this avatar of Mr. Sykes teaching the class in #24, or announcing to Ed Beck, in #21, that he'd come over to show him how to make a dynamite cream sauce.

I realize that I've just praised the book for using different artists to bring out the various aspects of a very volatile character, but there was always a sense of an underlying wisdom, even maturity. Now, he's locked into an adolescent "throw down" stance, denying all his own previous suffering and hard-won victory over it.

Which may, indeed, be what he's doing. But it makes the most three-dimensional character in comics as we know them seem quite flat.

Otherwise: the support cast? I think they're best used sparingly. True, Mavis has touched him, but Badger's basically a lone wolf, if you excuse the oxymoron. Riley just can't stand too much exposure. He's not the sidekick type: seems more of a "reality" check for our hero — another man-boy, but more securely attached to the mundane world. I could stand more of Daisy and Ham, in his role as an active employer, calling on Badger's services. Connie is great, weighted just about right. Ditto for Lamont.

I feel somewhat arrogant, flinging these capsule comments around, but they're just a sketch of what things look like from here, right?

Wilder thoughts: an entire Leroy issue? And what about Alice?

Horn bands (what about Colosseum?) are fine. How about fiddlers? Jerry Goodman (The Flock, Mahavishnu), David LaFlamme (It's a Beautiful Day),

Simon House (Hawkwind), Eddie Jobson, John Cale, David Cross (King Crimson), Darryl Way (Curved Air), Ray Shulman (Gentle Giant), Fred Frith, R. Shankar, that kid with Benthall, the guy from String Driven Thing and the Canadians: Hugh Marsh, Ben Mink, and the inimitable Nash the Slash. Just musing.

"This Badger is too young. He's a lightweight, with no gravities, no irony, none of the marks of experience."

All in all, I trust Mike Baron, and send my heartiest thanks.

Andrew Thomson
General Delivery
Canmore, Alberta, T0L 0M0

Welcome to the lettercol, guy. While I agree that Bill Reinhold's art was superb, Steven's is excellent in its energy, and personality, and the battle sequences are very exciting.

As for the maturity of the character, I believe Steven brought exactly what you are looking for in Badger #62-63.

Hey Bob,

Yowsah, yowsah, yowsah!!

Steven Butler's artwork for Badger #63 was excellent, and Randy Clark did a nice job inking him this time around.

Also, this was the most awesome Badger cover of the entire run. Including those killer Ron Lim frontispieces. Ask him to sell it to me, please. Isn't Tetrault a colorist?

Seeya at Munden's.

Uncle Elvis
110-7 Medical Court
Clarksville, TN 37043

Sorry, Unc, Badger #63's cover is spoken for, and Ian always signs the covers he colors.

Dear Bob,

The cover of Badger #63 and Badger's "I'll kill you, Larry" statement on page 9 gave me an uneasy feeling about my safety. It seemed to reach out past the books.

As a reader of this book, I would like to be considered a friend. So Bob, could you ask him nicely to lower the gun and not to call me "Larry"?!

Thanks.

Melissa Page
236 New Salem Loop
Nortonville, KY 42442

Friend Melissa, keep saying: "It's only a comic book. It's only a comic book." It helps.

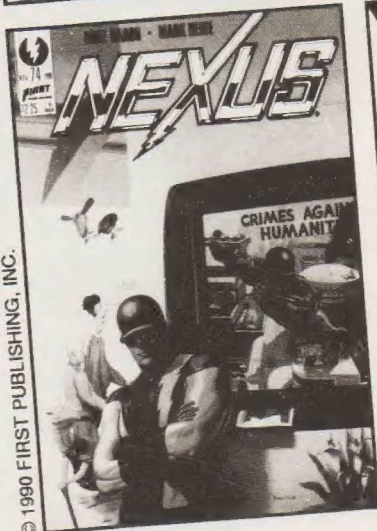
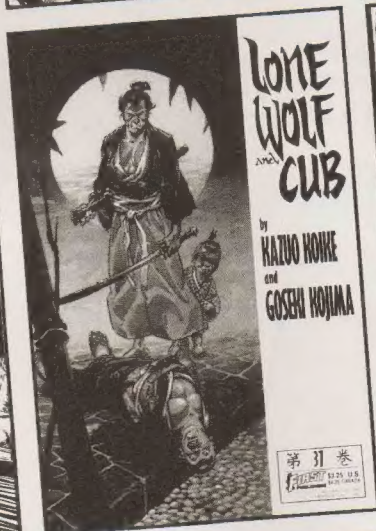
By the way, the weekend this issue went to press, the first-ever convention of Elvis imitators was held in Chicago. Truly karmic, eh?

— Bob Garcia



NEXT ISSUE: Joe Nappleseed is planting trees in corporate America's finest office buildings, parking lots, and banks — and to defend him, Badger must use the "Wotan Seed." By Mike Baron, Steven Butler, and Randy Clark.

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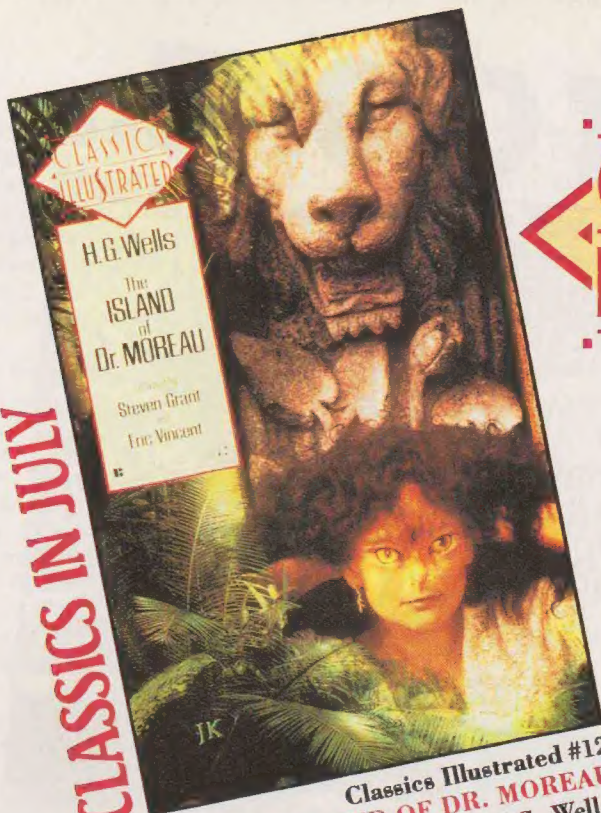
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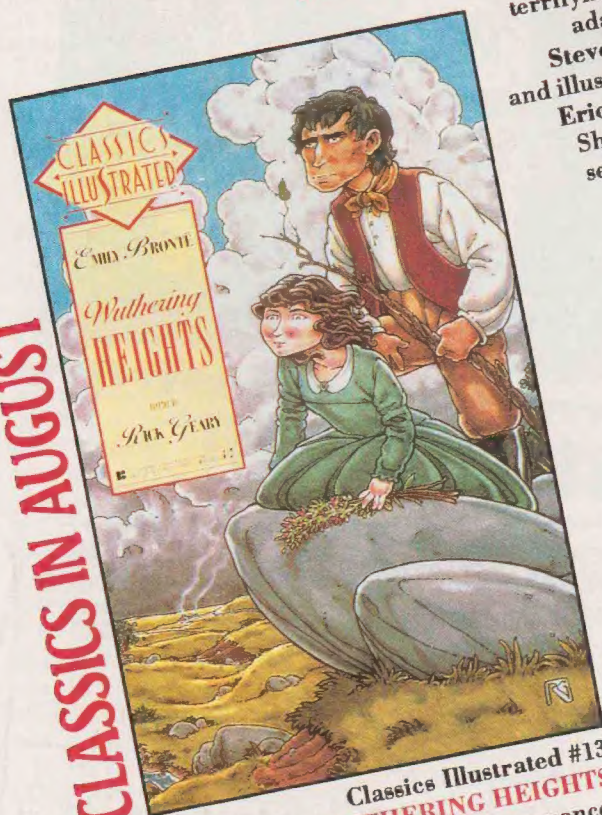
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